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HD **U. Connecticut: COLUMN: Vegetarian moral code misled**

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By Josh Levinson, The Daily Campus (U. Connecticut)

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STORRS, Conn. -- Way back when I was in high school and everyone had to

walk uphill both ways through 10 feet of snow, several of my friends decided that killing animals was, in fact, wrong. All of a sudden, I was surrounded by vegetarians. Over the next several months, they all came crawling back to the sweet mistress that I've affectionately entitled "Queen of Animal Flesh," but when you get to know her like I do, you just call her "Mother of All Things Tasty."

I've never really understood the viewpoint of vegetarians. "Meat is Murder," they claim, but as far as I can tell, murder has always been Mother Nature's most loving embrace. From the wolves' hunting of adorable little bunny rabbits to the systematic herding and killing of chickens for KFC, Gaia has always taught her best lessons through the death of innocent creatures.

Vegetarians argue that a wolf eats its prey for survival, while humans are more than capable of surviving on plants alone. Yet their pro-animal, anti-plant agenda has gone on for far too long.

In fact, I find it most interesting that vegetarians are so able to view cute little bunny rabbits and deer as innocent living creatures, yet harvesting and consuming fields of plants is perfectly OK.

What's to say that a plant cannot feel pain? Is it fair to say that wheat doesn't suffer simply because it cannot scream? Is it correct to claim that an ear of corn is not quietly suffering a painful, indignant death as we cut it apart and shuck it?

The bottom line remains that life feeds on life, and no amount of protests or ridiculous Shockwave Internet videos are going to change that. In order for you to continue to live something once living must have died, whether it's a cow or a piece of broccoli. If this is a serious problem for you, then perhaps you should consider the value of your own life.

Some people (cough ... PETA ... cough) claim that the problem lies not so much with the consumption of animals, but in the cruelty of their treatment. Videos available on their Web site show chickens being beaten and slaughtered in a most inconsiderate manner.

Perhaps in a perfect world, each future KFC bucket would receive daily sponge baths and nightly serenades of "Sweet Child O' Mine," but the truth remains that there are six billion people in the world and growing and

not every chicken can really live a full, wonderful life of meaning before it goes to the Great Chicken Coop in the Sky.

Acts of genocide and persecution happen every day and hunger and disease have ravaged humans across the globe. Maybe I'm selfish, but I'm far more concerned with the preventable suffering of humanity as a whole than I am about whether or not a cow has really grabbed life by the horns and lived it to its fullest.

If one must be consumed with injustice and suffering, then simply look at the AIDS epidemic in Africa, where 4 million new cases are diagnosed every year. Despite the relative ease of producing drugs to help prolong victims' lives, drug companies simply cannot afford to donate billions of dollars worth of drugs to help people that give no economic advantage.

The lesson here is obvious: Helping people isn't worth your money and if it isn't worth your money, then it probably isn't going to happen, period. Quite honestly, the idea that someone would care more about a bunch of chickens being slaughtered in a KFC warehouse than the millions suffering from disease across the globe is sickening.

Ultimately, I'm convinced that if a chicken could figure out a way to wield a machete, it would not only willingly do so, but it would gladly slice me up and eat me -- assuming I was tasty enough.

Vegetarians may think that bunnies and dolphins and cows are all cute and loveable, but once they figure out a way to herd us into small cages and mass-produce and sell us, they will. Trust me on this one. Animals have a remarkable lack of empathy when they start to get hungry.

Besides all of what I've already said, there is one simple, undeniable fact -- animals taste good. It's as simple as that. You can tell me

about how much a cow had to suffer or a pig lived in its own filth, but that doesn't make the bacon cheeseburger taste any less amazing. I've watched the videos and I'm still not convinced.

In fact, if you want proof that your God doesn't exist, why not consider the fact that the deliciousness of an animal is directly proportional to the amount of torture it receives? How else could you possibly explain veal?

Before you start freaking out and writing your letters ("Dear Josh, you are a sick person and even though I used to love meat, your article was so insensitive and cruel that you single-handedly turned me into a vegetarian. Sincerely, Some Communist in Birkenstocks."), bear in mind that I did not, in fact, make veal taste that good.

Believe it or not, I'm not nearly as powerful as that and if I was I'd probably be using my powers for much more important things, like smiting Dave Matthews and scaring old people.

The world is not perfect and the need for life to destroy life in order to survive is simply the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the suffering of the world. But if it makes you feel any better, I'm pretty sure you'll forget all about it when you turn on "The O.C."

After all, you're only human.

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